

2021 King County For-Hire Transportation Annual Report

April 2022*



King County

*A data point was revised on 5/23/22 and is noted on page 12.

Contents

I. Executive Summary.....	3
II. Background	5
2021 in Review	6
III. Report Requirements.....	8
Taxicab and For-Hire Vehicle Licensing	8
Transportation Network Companies and Vehicles.....	10
For-Hire Driver Licensing	11
For-Hire Driver Permits	12
Response Times	13
Enforcement.....	15
Passenger Complaints	16
Rates	17
Taxicab Scrip Vouchers.....	17
Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Licenses.....	18
IV. Statement of Sufficiency	20
Appendix A – King County Taxicab History 1976 to 2020	21

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Jurisdiction & Type of Agreement	6
Figure 2 – Number of Active Licensed Taxicabs	9
Figure 3 – Number of Active Licensed For-Hire Vehicles	10
Figure 4 – TNC Vehicle Endorsements Approved*	10
Figure 5 – For-Hire Driver Licenses Issued	11
Figure 6 – Total Count of TNC For-hire Driver Permits.....	12
Figure 7 – King County Taxicab Service Area by Zone*	13
Figure 8 – Map of King County Taxicab Service Area Zones.....	14
Figure 9 – Minutes +/- Optimum Response Time by Zone	15
Figure 10 – License and Permit Enforcement Actions.....	16
Figure 11 – Number and Nature of Complaints.....	16
Figure 12 – Metro Taxicab Scrip – Books Issued and Total Sales.....	18
Figure 13 – WAT Vehicle Maintenance, Equipment and Acquisition Reimbursement*	19
Figure 14 – Trip with a Passenger in a Wheelchair Reimbursements*	19

I. Executive Summary

Produced in accordance with King County Code (KCC) 6.64.740, the 2021 For-Hire Transportation Annual Report provides information on the number of taxicabs, for-hire vehicles, and transportation network company (TNC) endorsed vehicles; the number of drivers licensed; service response times; complaints; and other information related to the for-hire transportation industry in King County between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.

King County's (County) Records and Licensing Services Division (RALS) provides regulatory oversight and code enforcement services over the for-hire transportation industry, and is charged with safeguarding passengers, drivers, and the public. RALS regulates the operation of the for-hire industry in unincorporated King County. In 1995, the County entered an interlocal agreement with the City of Seattle (Seattle), whereby the County manages all for-hire driver licensing functions for both jurisdictions, and Seattle manages all for-hire vehicle licensing functions for both jurisdictions. RALS also manages the for-hire driver permitting and vehicle endorsement functions for both jurisdictions. In addition, RALS has interlocal service agreements with 16 cities and the Port of Seattle to provide for-hire transportation regulatory services.

Ordinance 17892, approved in September 2014, authorized significant for-hire transportation-related regulatory changes.¹ The Ordinance added regulations for TNCs and modified KCC Chapter 6.64 to streamline and update regulatory requirements across the for-hire transportation industry.

The information presented in this report depicts a struggling taxicab and for-hire vehicle industry and is based on feedback from owners and drivers. Owners and drivers are concerned for the future of their small, independently owned businesses.

Pursuant to King County Code 64.740.B.5, this report finds that there are a sufficient number of taxicab and for-hire vehicle medallions in the areas served by King County licensed vehicles. At the same time, trend data outlined in the report shows a decline in active medallions. Updating the regulatory requirements, which is expected to occur later this year, may help encourage owners with inactive medallions to return to operation.

The 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports noted ongoing work that the County and Seattle engaged in to align and streamline for-hire regulations in both jurisdictions. In 2021, the County and Seattle regulatory staff collaborated in drafting proposed regulations intended to improve alignment between the two jurisdictions, remove unnecessary regulatory requirements, provide entrepreneurial flexibility, and begin the transition to a digital system enabling participation in the digital mobility marketplace. It is anticipated that proposed regulatory changes may be transmitted to the King County Council before the end of 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the for-hire industry in 2020 and 2021. Ridership dropped severely and thousands chose not to operate. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, transportation provided by taxicabs and TNCs was designated by the Washington State Governor as an essential service and the King County Executive designated licensing of for-hire transportation providers as an essential service.

¹ [Link to Ordinance 17892](#)

Due to mandatory telework orders, the for-hire driver licensing office closed to the public in early March 2020 and remained closed through 2021. As an interim measure, all active for-hire licensees with a valid driver license were emailed automatic license extensions beginning March 2020 and into 2021 without payment. In spring 2021, RALS discontinued issuing temporary license extensions and began processing for-hire driver licenses in a new online system, Accela. By the end of 2021, RALS had processed 462 for-hire driver license applications and issued 450 for-hire licenses through Accela. New applications and renewals have been declining for many years, with pandemic uncertainty and low ridership further fueling the decline.

In 2021, there were 280 taxicabs (metered fares) and 71 for-hire vehicles (flat-rate fares) licensed to operate in unincorporated King County (and contract cities), with an additional 71 taxicabs licensed to operate only in Seattle.

Also in 2021, RALS received 34,156 applications for TNC for-hire driver permits and vehicle endorsements (this number includes both new and renewing applicants, duplicates, resubmittals, updates, etc.). Of the 34,156 total applications received, 14,924 were unique and RALS approved 12,285 unique drivers to receive TNC for-hire driver permits. For the second consecutive year since TNC regulations began in 2014, the number of permitted drivers decreased.

II. Background

Department Overview: The Department of Executive Services (DES) includes the Records and Licensing Services Division (RALS). Among its duties, RALS strives to provide customer-focused, accessible vehicle, vessel, and for-hire transportation licensing services. RALS regulates the operation of taxicabs, flat-rate for-hire vehicles, and transportation network company vehicles in unincorporated King County.

Historical Context: In 1979, King County (County), the City of Seattle (Seattle), and the Port of Seattle embarked on a program to regionalize taxicab regulations and licensing by developing consistent regulations and services across jurisdictions. This promoted public safety and customer service by standardizing fees, regulations, enforcement, and rate review procedures throughout the County.

This program continued until September 1988, when these three entities formed the Regional Taxicab Commission. The Regional Taxicab Commission recommended rates, entry restrictions, and other related revisions to the KCC prior to ending on December 31, 1990.

Based on the Regional Taxicab Commission's recommendation to issue a moratorium on new taxicab licenses, the King County Council passed Ordinance 9986 on June 10, 1991, permanently closing the issuance of new taxicab licenses. Under subsequent ordinances, a small number of additional taxicab licenses have been issued.

A history of taxicab and for-hire licensing in the County is provided in the appendix.

RALS has interlocal service agreements with the Port of Seattle, the City of Seattle, and 16 other cities in the County to provide for-hire transportation regulatory services. Figure 1 is a list of the jurisdictions that contract with the County for regulatory services.

Figure 1 – Jurisdiction & Type of Agreement

City	Agreement For ...
Auburn	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Bellevue	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Burien	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Covington	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Enumclaw	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Federal Way	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Issaquah	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Kenmore	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Kent	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Kirkland	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Maple Valley	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Port of Seattle	Enforcement of County Code on Port Property
Redmond	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Renton	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Sammamish	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
SeaTac	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code
Seattle	Licensing of City For-Hire Drivers and Enforcement of City Code
Shoreline	Licensing and Enforcement of City Code

2021 in Review

COVID-19 Pandemic: RALS offices remained closed to customer-facing services in 2021 but maintained services remotely. As an essential service, RALS continued modified procedures processing and issuing licenses and permits, including emailing licenses and permits to drivers and mailing vehicle endorsement decals.

Temporary Suspension of Vehicle Age Limit: In April 2021, in consideration for the ongoing pandemic, the County and Seattle suspended enforcement of the ten-year age limit for taxicabs, for-hire vehicles, and TNC vehicles through June 30, 2022. Enforcement of the ten-year limit is planned to resume for Seattle-only and dual vehicle medallions and TNC vehicles in 2023.

Licensing Fees Decreased: In response to the pandemic's effect on the for-hire transportation industry, the County took action to provide relief for licensees and to reduce barriers to resuming for-hire transportation service. The County reduced fees assessed to licensees under King County Code (KCC) 6.64.026 and KCC 4A.750.100(B) beginning May 10, 2021. The reduction to fees was applied to the Vehicle Medallion (license) fee, Change of vehicle medallion owner fee, taxicab association licensing fee, for-hire company annual fee, and the for-hire driver annual license fee. Seattle also reduced these fees for Seattle-licensed medallions and drivers.

Stakeholder Outreach: In February and March 2021, County and Seattle staff conducted an online survey (with a paper option available) for taxicab and for-hire vehicle medallion owners and drivers, along with four in-person focus group meetings and one virtual focus group meeting.

To support this outreach, community liaisons were hired to help with translation and interpreter services in four languages (Tigrinya, Somali, Oromo, Amharic). Liaisons canvassed various locations throughout the County where for-hire drivers gather, helped coordinate the in-person focus group meetings, and assisted owners and drivers in responding to the written or online survey. A fifth focus group meeting was held virtually with the help of a local labor organization.

Additionally, outreach and engagement sessions were held with taxi associations and for-hire companies. The purpose of the outreach to medallion owners, for-hire drivers, taxi associations and for-hire companies was to discuss changes to for-hire regulations and inform future decision-making. In addition to providing helpful input, the County and Seattle learned that more immediate help was needed to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide near term relief.

Three New Joint County-Seattle Rules Adopted: As a result of the industry outreach conducted earlier in the year, the County and Seattle collaborated to enact three new rules in support of taxicab and for-hire operators.

1. [Taximeters \(LIC-8-4-PR\)](#): Provides guidance for testing and approving taximeters, including smart taximeters, and clarifies rules about taxis varying fares from those established in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 6.310.530 and KCC 6.64.760 when using the application dispatch system (ADS) function of a smart taximeter system.²
2. [Application Dispatch Systems \(LIC-8-5-PR\)](#): Provides updated requirements for using an ADS and recognition of the ADS within a smart taximeter system.³
3. [Temporary Changes to Insurance Requirements for Taxicabs and For-Hire Vehicles \(LIC-8-6-PR\)](#): With a goal of increasing cost-effective insurance options for taxicab and flat-rate/for-hire vehicle owners, this rule implemented temporary changes to cancellation notification requirements, removed a prohibition on “named driver exclusions”, and amended the A.M. Best Rating requirement from B to B-. It also allowed surplus lines from an insurer with an A.M. Best Rating of not less than B (A.M. Best Financial Size Category VII).⁴

Reimbursement from the Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund: In November 2021, a joint King County-Seattle rule, FIN-10-3-4PR, was published for public comment and adopted in January of 2022.⁵ King County Public Rule FIN-10-3-4 repealed and replaced FIN-10-3-3 (adopted in 2020). This rule helped ensure the continued viability of wheelchair transportation service in the County and Seattle by reestablishing minimum trip requirements and updating reimbursements for vehicle maintenance, equipment, and acquisition.

Seattle Implements TNC Driver Minimum Compensation: Seattle implemented a new law effective January 1, 2021, establishing minimum driver compensation standards for TNCs that perform 200K trips or more per quarter. Seattle’s Fare Share Plan includes a TNC Driver Deactivation ordinance that was implemented in 2020 and the TNC Minimum Compensation ordinance.

² [Link to LIC-8-4-PR](#)

³ [Link to LIC-8-5-PR](#)

⁴ [Link to LIC-8-6-PR](#)

⁵ [Link to FIN-10-3-4PR](#)

Updating For-Hire Regulations: Throughout 2020 and 2021, RALS worked closely with Seattle’s Consumer Protection Division of the Finance and Administrative Services Department to draft potential proposed revisions to County and Seattle for-hire regulations. These updates are intended to simplify and align licensing models, remove barriers that limit competition, support transitioning to technology that enables dynamic fares and alternative pricing strategies, and improve customer service. The potential changes focus primarily on taxicab and for-hire vehicle operations.

New statewide TNC legislation: The 2022 Washington State Legislature approved SHB 2076 establishing new statewide TNC regulations. The Governor signed the Bill, which is set to go into effect July 2022. While the local effects of SHB 2076 are still being evaluated, the bill preserves King County’s regulatory model and local regulatory authority.

Transportation Regulation Improvement Project (TRIP): TRIP was initiated by Seattle’s Consumer Protection Division and King County’s For-Hire Licensing team in June 2016 to implement a new shared licensing platform, Accela. The purpose of this joint platform is to streamline regulatory administration, improve coordination and data sharing between Seattle and the County, and improve quality, efficiency, and transparency of processes and data for staff and customers.

Implementation of the system has occurred in stages with medallion activities launching in 2019; the customer portal for submitting medallion transactions online in 2020; and for-hire driver license processing launched spring 2021. This platform enables applicants to apply and renew licenses online, rather than visiting the downtown Seattle RALS and Consumer Protection Division offices. To facilitate the transition to online licensing, RALS provides individual applicant support through virtual meeting sessions with applicants.⁶

III. Report Requirements

Taxicab and For-Hire Vehicle Licensing

Taxicabs offer consumers a for-hire ride with a fare that is metered based on time and distance, while for-hire vehicles offer consumers a for-hire ride based on a flat rate. Both taxicabs and for-hire vehicles can be hailed or dispatched. Taxicab and for-hire vehicle licenses converted to medallions in 2015, with the number of available medallions restricted by County and Seattle regulations.

Taxicab medallions: King County Code caps the number of taxicab medallions allowed in the County at 561 (KCC 6.64.700). In Seattle, the cap is 1,050. Medallions licensed to pick up passengers in both the County and Seattle, generally referred to as “dual” medallions, are included in each of the County’s and Seattle’s caps. In the County and Seattle, the 50 Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab (WAT) medallions are dual and are excluded from the cap.

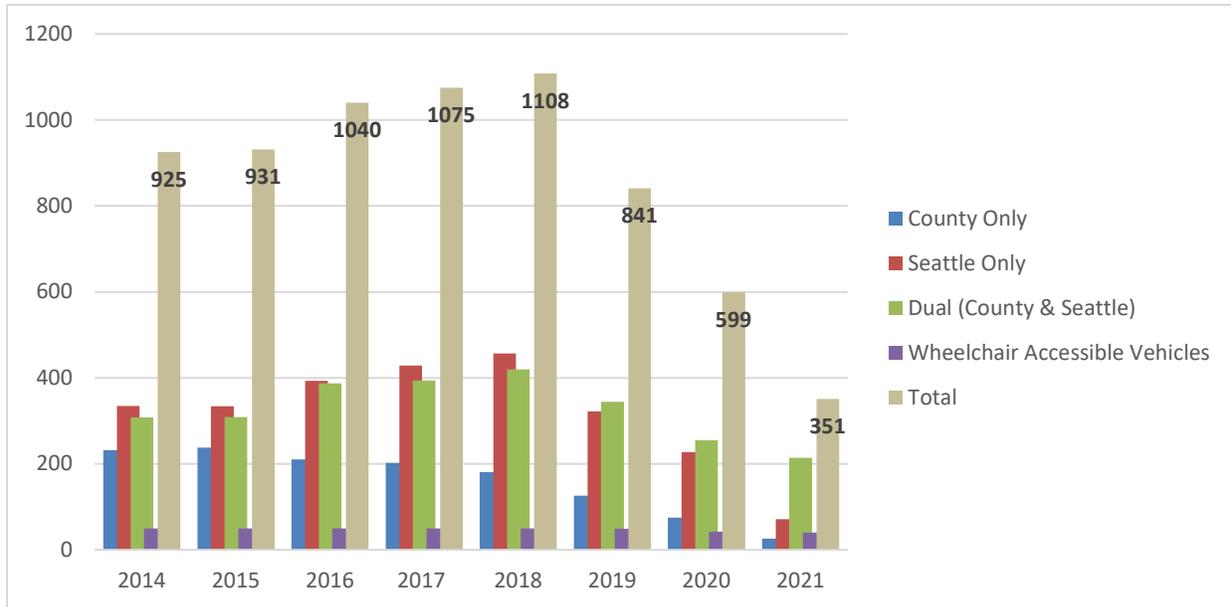
To assist medallion owners in reducing out-of-pocket expenses while not in service, Seattle, on behalf of the County and City, created a process for Seattle and County medallion owners to place their medallions on hold and temporarily suspend service during the pandemic. Placing a medallion on hold allows an owner to reduce their commercial auto insurance expense while their vehicle is not in service. Owners can easily return to service by providing proof of insurance and requesting their medallion to be

⁶ [Link to the public facing online Accela portal](#)

placed back in active status.

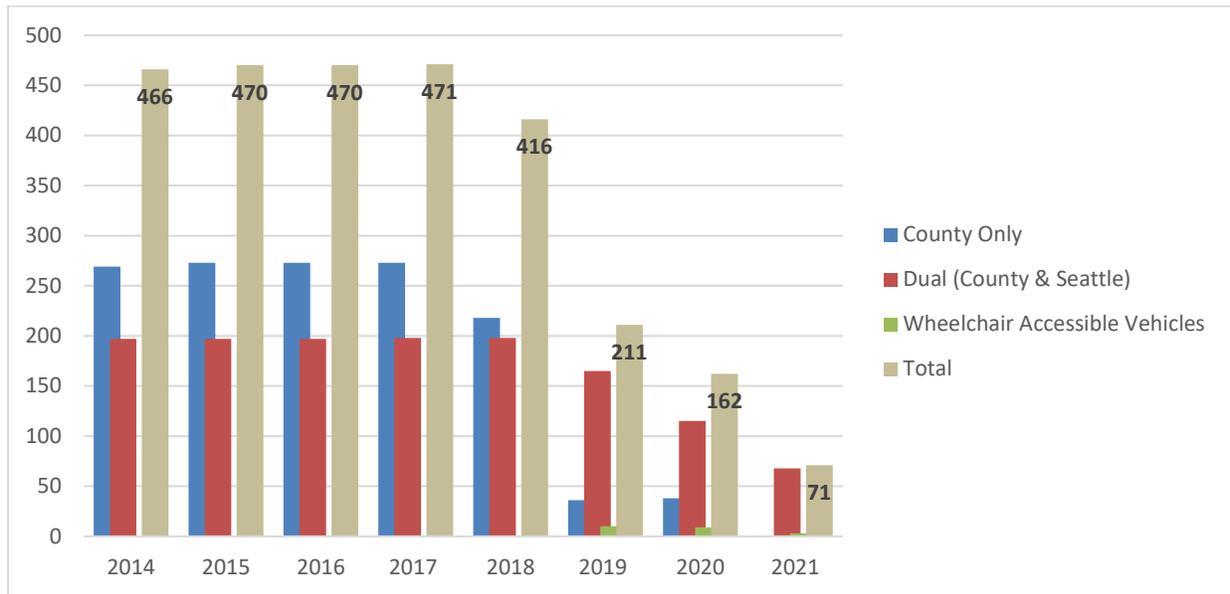
Figure 2 shows the sharp decrease in active medallions that began even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Active taxicab medallions have decreased from 1,108 in 2018 to 351 in 2021, a decline of 757 active taxicabs, or 68 percent fewer active taxicabs since 2018. In most instances, inactive taxicab medallions that have been placed on hold or not renewed, owners cited declining business prior to the pandemic; declining business as a result of the pandemic; high operating costs; or avoidance of COVID-19 exposure as reasons for the hold or non-renewal.

Figure 2 – Number of Active Licensed Taxicabs



For-hire vehicle medallions: For-hire vehicle medallions are capped at 471 in the County, comprised of 271 County-only medallions and 200 Seattle & County “dual” medallions. Figure 3 shows that active for-hire vehicle medallions have decreased from 416 in 2018 to 71 in 2021, a decline of 345 active for-hire vehicles, 82 percent fewer active for-hire vehicles since 2018. Nearly all the inactive for-hire vehicle medallions were voluntarily surrendered, expired without renewal, or voluntarily placed on hold. For-hire vehicle medallion owners cited many of same issues as taxi owners for why they surrendered their medallion or placed it on hold, noting a lack of business, the high cost of operating a for-hire vehicle, or to avoid exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

Figure 3 – Number of Active Licensed For-Hire Vehicles

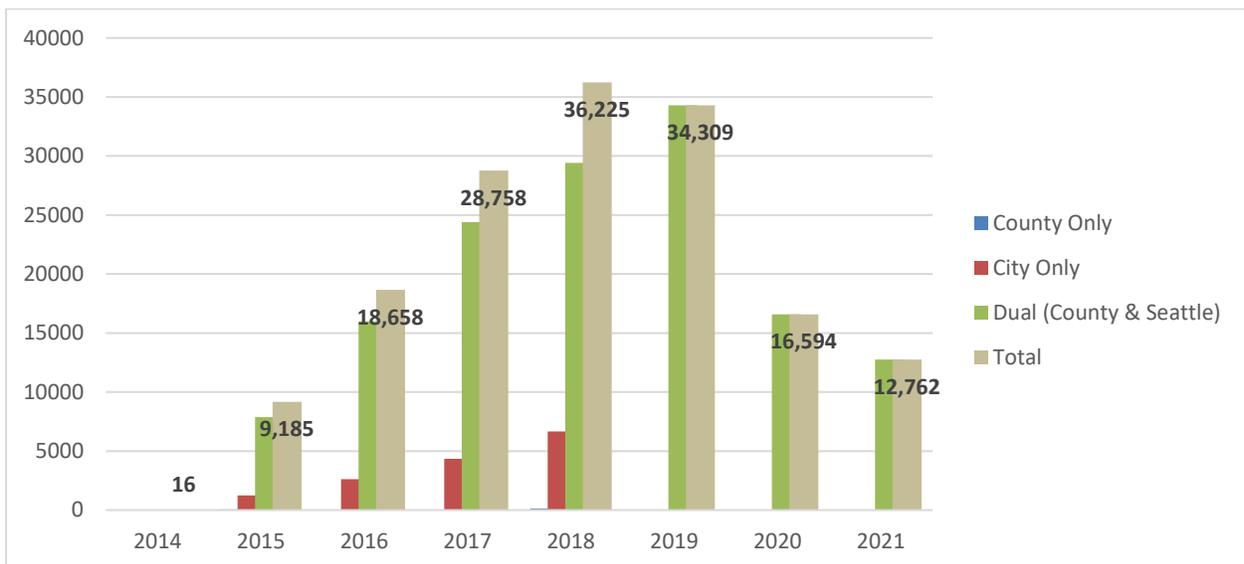


Transportation Network Companies and Vehicles

In the Seattle-King County market, 2021 was the seventh full year of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) being licensed to operate. Effective with the implementation of Ordinance 17898 in 2014, personal vehicles used to provide ride services via a smartphone application (app) are required to have a vehicle endorsement. Vehicle endorsement applications are incorporated into the application for a for-hire driver permit.

Among other requirements associated with TNC vehicles, all must successfully complete an annual safety inspection performed by a director-approved mechanic. The following chart (Figure 4) shows the number of TNC vehicle endorsements approved annually.

Figure 4 – TNC Vehicle Endorsements Approved*



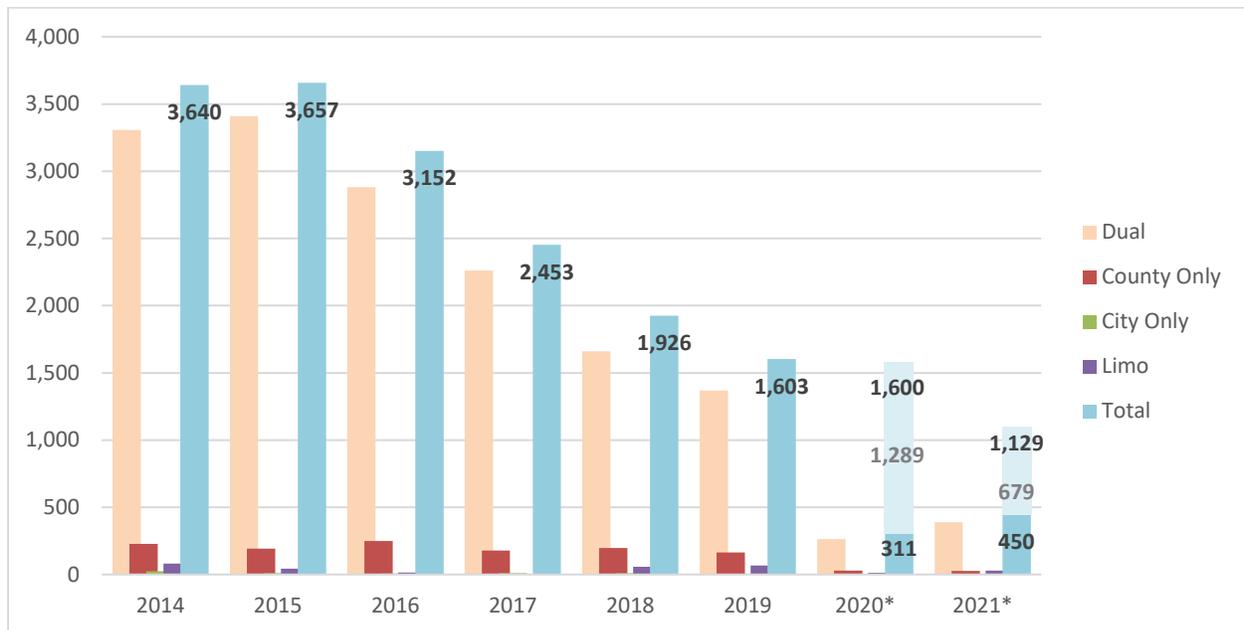
*Excludes vehicles with jurisdiction changes throughout the year

In 2019, Ordinance 18874⁷ removed the requirement for TNC drivers to be the registered owner of the endorsed vehicle they drive. It also added a 10-year age limit for TNC vehicles. These changes aligned with Seattle regulations and resulted in the issuance of County/Seattle “dual” TNC vehicle permits for all TNC affiliated vehicles.

For-Hire Driver Licensing

Every driver operating a taxicab or for-hire vehicle within the County must have a for-hire driver license. In 2020, RALS issued 311 new and renewal for-hire driver applications prior to closing the office for in-person services in mid-March. From mid-March 2020 through the end of that year, RALS issued 1,289 license extensions to all for-hire driver licensees with a valid driver’s license. In 2021, to support drivers during the pandemic, RALS issued 679 license extensions prior to launching the new online licensing platform. After launching the new platform in May 2021, RALS processed 462 applications and issued 450 new and renewal for-hire driver licenses. The difference of 12 between the applications processed and the new and renewal licenses issued reflects applications either denied, rejected, or where an applicant failed to complete the process.

Figure 5 – For-Hire Driver Licenses Issued



*The 2020 total of 1,600 is a combination of the 311 pre-pandemic applications and 1,289 extensions (includes all license types). The 2021 total of 1,129 is a combination of the 679 extensions given prior to launching the new online licensing platform in May 2021 and the 450 applications issued through the new platform.

To ensure public and passenger safety, each applicant is carefully screened and must complete several requirements to obtain a for-hire driver’s license. All new and renewing applicants must pass an annual criminal background check and driving record review. Additionally, all new for-hire driver applicants are required to complete driver training and pass the for-hire driver examination, as well as a defensive

⁷ [Link to Ordinance 18874](#)

driving course. There were 381 tests administered in 2021, with an overall pass rate of 45 percent.

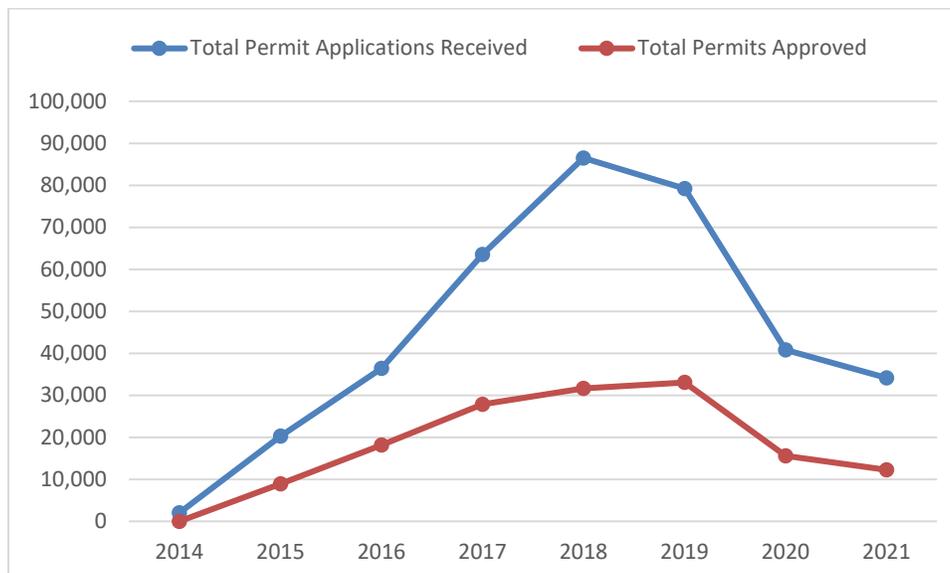
For-Hire Driver Permits

Drivers operating a personal vehicle for a TNC are required to obtain a for-hire driver permit and a vehicle endorsement. The for-hire driver permit is essentially the same as the for-hire driver license that taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers must obtain, but also allows the driver to drive a TNC endorsed vehicle in addition to a taxi or for-hire vehicle.

TNCs submit applications for for-hire driver permits and vehicle endorsements on behalf of their drivers. TNC drivers complete the onboarding process with their TNC prior to the application being submitted. An application includes certification of County-approved, company-provided, for-hire driver training and testing; certification of a defensive driving course completion; a criminal background check report; a driver’s abstract (driving history) report; vehicle registration and vehicle safety inspection form.

In 2021, a total of 34,156 TNC for-hire driver permit applications were received and 12,285* unique TNC for-hire driver permits approved. The significant difference in “received applications” compared to “approved” is related to a variety of factors, including but not limited to: 1) more than one application is received for a driver, since drivers often drive for more than one TNC; 2) rejected applications must be resubmitted (if information is missing, out of date, or does not match; and 3) applications received at the end of the year may not be processed until the beginning of the following year. Figure 6 shows the total number of for-hire driver permit applications received and approved beginning in December 2014 when licensing requirements went into effect.

Figure 6 – Total Count of TNC For-hire Driver Permits



*Revised online version of report 5/23/2022

Response Times

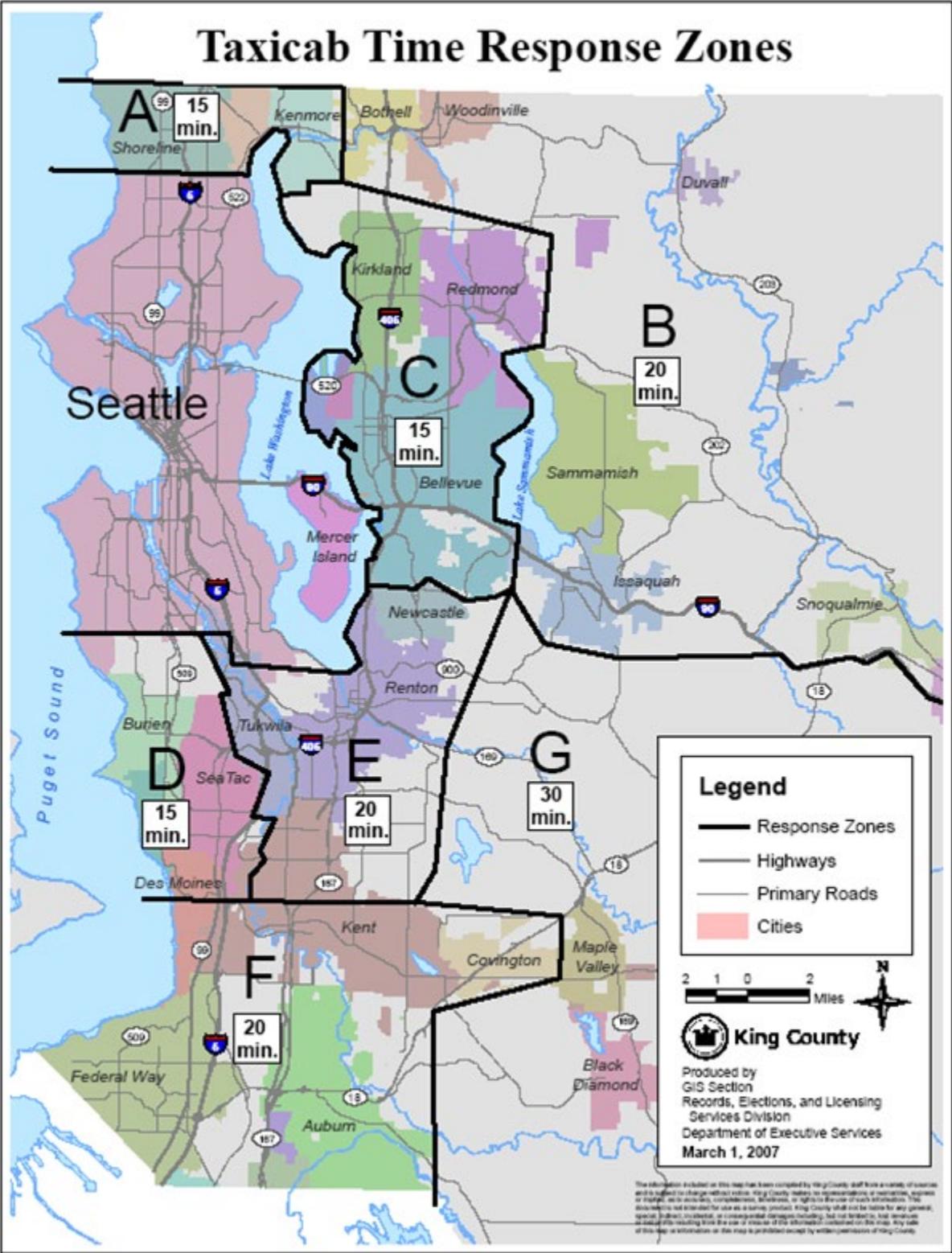
KCC 6.64.730 requires RALS to establish and regulate a schedule of optimum times for responses to requests for taxi service. Response times are calculated as the time elapsed from when the trip is created in the dispatch system to the time the meter is engaged. The meter is engaged after the customer has been seated and the vehicle begins to move. In developing the optimum average taxicab response times, the County is divided into the following eight zones described in Figure 7 and shown in Figure 8.

Figure 7 – King County Taxicab Service Area by Zone*

Zone	Service Area	Description
A	North City	Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, North County
B	Northeast County	Bothell, Woodinville, Fall City, Sammamish, Issaquah
C	Eastside	Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond
D	South/Southwest County	White Center, Burien, Des Moines, West Kent, Airport (West of I-5)
E	North/Southeast County	Renton, Tukwila, May Creek, Newcastle, North Kent (east of I-5)
F	South County	Federal Way, Auburn, South Kent
G	Southeast County	Enumclaw, Black Diamond, Covington, Maple Valley
City	Seattle	All Seattle City Limits

* Taxicabs at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport are available on demand; therefore, the response time is zero and is not included in Zone D (the airport area).

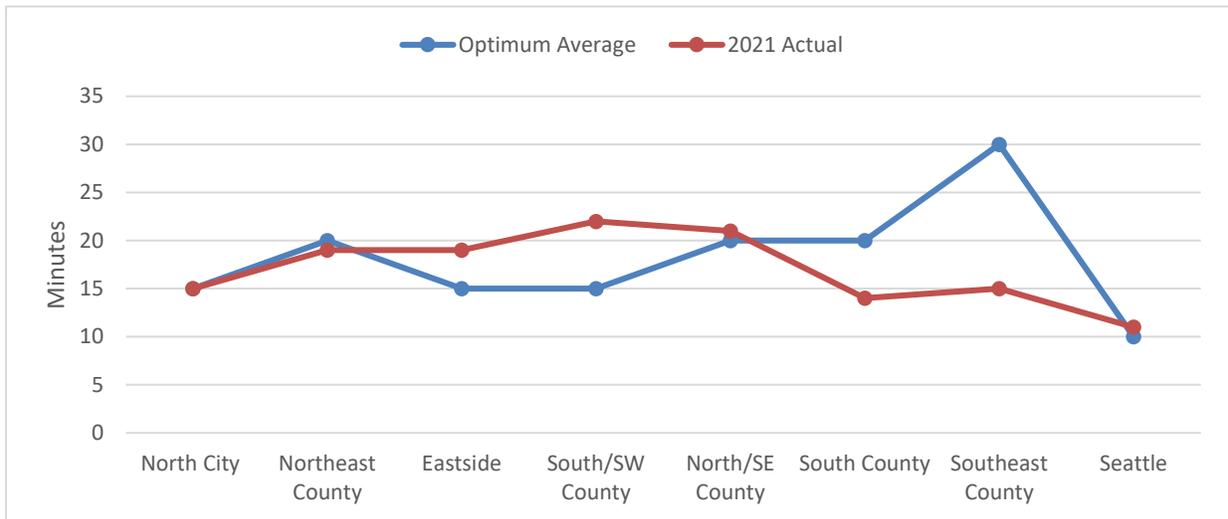
Figure 8 – Map of King County Taxicab Service Area Zones



Each year, RALS conducts a survey of taxicab company dispatch records to determine *actual* average response times for service requests, which are then compared to the *optimum* response times (Figure 9). Some zones have occasionally averaged slightly higher than optimum response times in recent years.

In 2021, four of the eight zones had average service response times one to seven minutes longer than the established optimum response times.

Figure 9 – Minutes +/- Optimum Response Time by Zone



Enforcement

Under an interlocal agreement with Seattle, the County and Seattle enforce the respective licensing regulations for each other’s jurisdiction. In addition to unincorporated King County, RALS also enforces for-hire regulations through interlocal agreements for the Port of Seattle at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and in the cities of Auburn, Bellevue, Burien, Covington, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Maple Valley, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, SeaTac, and Shoreline (Figure 1).

Enforcement action occurs through the issuance of a Notice and Order following:

1. observation of a violation or as a result of a complaint; or
2. when a license or permit is denied, suspended, or revoked, or when civil penalties are issued.

Seattle issues Notice of Violations (NOVs) to Seattle and Seattle/County “dual” licensed vehicles and drivers for infractions which may carry a monetary civil penalty. Field enforcement activities include undercover enforcement, which consists of inspectors taking covert rides posing as customers and making assessments about the ride for driver behavior and vehicle condition, with a focus on safety.

In 2020, due to COVID-19 Pandemic conditions, beginning in March, all field enforcement activities remained suspended through the end of 2021. Figure 10 lists the type of enforcement actions and the number of actions taken for each since 2019.

Figure 10 – License and Permit Enforcement Actions

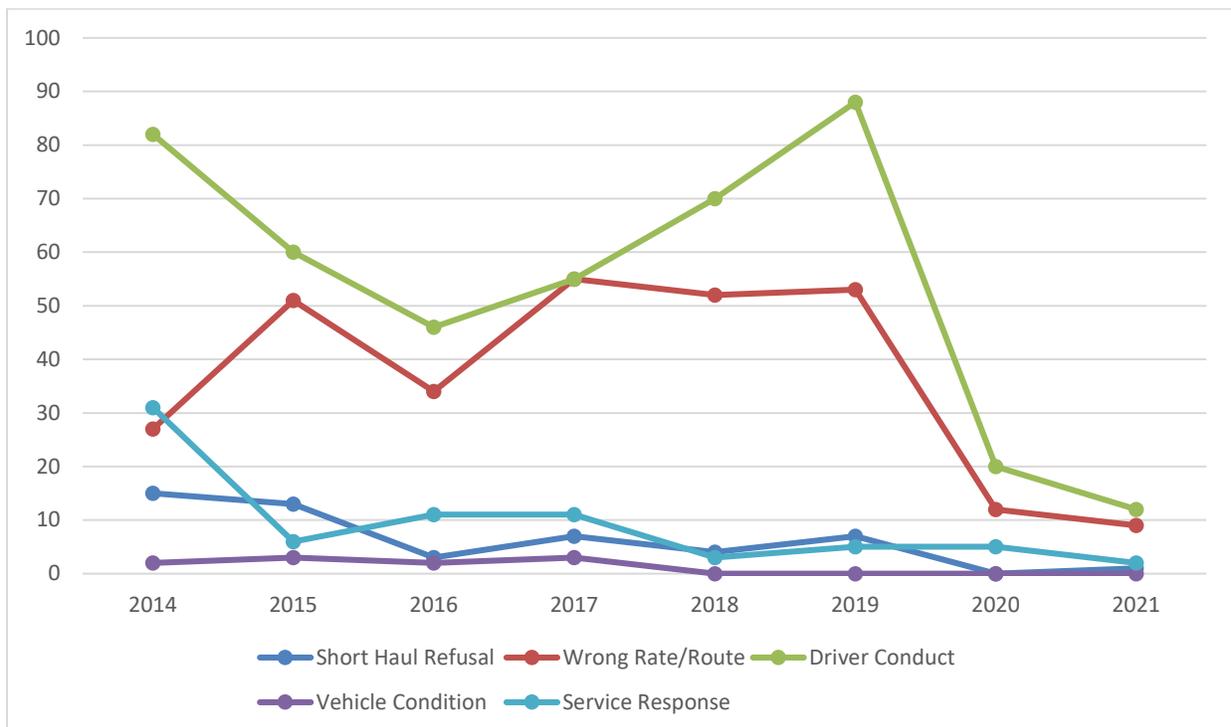
Notice and Order Type	2019	2020	2021
Application denial	14	2	3
Suspension	49	5	1
Suspension/Revocation	1	0	0
Revocation	4	0	0
Civil Penalty	11	5	1
Notice of Violation w/Civil Penalty	192	21	0
Total	271	33	5

Passenger Complaints

The County, Seattle, and the Port of Seattle share a taxi complaint hotline, 206-296-TAXI. The hotline is not staffed, but callers can leave a message and County or Seattle code enforcement staff will respond. This number is visibly displayed in all Seattle and County taxicabs and for-hire vehicles so that passengers have easy access to the regulatory agency if their experience is such that a complaint is warranted. TNC operators are not required to display this complaint line number, however, the TNC application dispatch systems provide the rider the ability to report complaints to the TNC for resolution.

All complaints received by the County are investigated by the County. Investigation findings may include an assessment of monetary civil penalties and/or temporary or permanent license suspension issued through a notice and order process. Figure 11 provides an overview of the number and nature of complaints received in 2021.

Figure 11 – Number and Nature of Complaints



Rates

Taxicab meter (taximeter) rates are regulated by KCC 6.64.760. The initial charge is called the “drop rate” and then a per mile fee accumulates. When the vehicle slows below 12 mph, the passenger is charged based on wait time instead of the per mile fee.

Changes to taximeter rates in the past decade are:

- A twenty cent (\$0.20) increase to the per mile fee in September 2012
- A ten cent (\$0.10) meter drop rate increase to incorporate the Wheelchair Accessible Surcharge (WAS) fee required by Ordinance 17892 in November 2014, which is paid into the Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund

For-hire companies are required to set their fares and submit them to RALS annually. Additionally, because these companies do not operate using a meter, for-hire drivers are required to keep a printed rate book to provide to customers upon request.

For trips requested/dispatched via an app or Application Dispatch System (ADS), fares are set by the company and not by regulation or public rule, whether the trip was provided by a taxicab, for-hire vehicle, or TNC vehicle.

Taximeters typically use a single meter rate. Taxicabs licensed in both the County and Seattle use two rates. The rates are static. Rates in a taximeter are adjusted by unsealing the device manually, adjusting the rate, and resealing the meter. Regulatory inspectors must reseal the meter after verifying the rate(s). Rate changes by regulatory action are infrequent and do not respond to market fluctuations that depend on real-time data, such as traffic information, demand for service, and other market conditions.

The traditional taximeter is not designed to provide variable rates, dynamic pricing, calculate split fares, include add-ons other than set increments (\$0.50) to cover ferry fees, road and bridge tolls, etc. In contrast, smart taximeters allow for such dynamic pricing. They function like TNC apps and allow for variable rates, fare splitting, and precise add-ons when approved and configured to do so. The ability to adjust fares using more demand-responsive and data driven fare strategies can increase competitiveness, efficiency, and profitability.

The County has worked with Seattle to enable limited use of smart taximeters as part of an ongoing pilot to evaluate the technology. The current use of smart taximeters is restricted to replicating the distance and time calculations of a traditional taxi meter unless the smart taximeter also includes an application dispatch system. In 2021, RALS implemented public rules LIC-8-4-PR Taximeters and LIC-8-5-PR Application Dispatch Systems to clarify when application dispatch systems incorporated into a smart taximeter can leverage rate and fare flexibility.⁸

Taxicab Scrip Vouchers

King County Metro issues taxicab scrip to County residents who have a regional reduced bus fare permit (for seniors and people with disabilities) and are registered for the taxi scrip program (requires income at or below 70 percent of the state median income).

Registrants may purchase up to eight books of scrip from Metro each month; scrip does not expire. Each

⁸ Links to [LIC-8-4-PR](#) and [LIC-8-5-PR](#)

booklet has a \$10 face value and contains coupons in \$0.50 and \$1 denominations. Registrants pay 50 percent of the face value or \$5 per booklet. Currently, seven taxicab companies participate in the taxicab scrip program. Historically, most trips are short and taken in the urban areas where taxi service is more available.

Figure 12 shows the total number of taxicab scrip books issued by Metro and the total collected in sales by year.

Figure 12 – Metro Taxicab Scrip – Books Issued and Total Sales

Year	Taxicab Scrip Books Issued	Total Taxicab Scrip Sales
2016	58,004	\$290,020
2017	56,476	\$282,340
2018	41,012	\$205,060
2019	47,852	\$239,260
2020	29,729	\$148,645
2021	29,068	\$145,340

Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Licenses

Currently, there are 50 dual medallions wheelchair accessible taxicab (WAT) operating in Seattle/County. Regular taxicab and for-hire vehicle medallion holders can also convert their vehicles to wheelchair accessible vehicles and continue to operate under their regular medallion. In 2021, there were eight active wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) associated with regular (not WAT) medallions including four that voluntarily converted in 2021.

Ordinance 17892 (2014) introduced the addition of a wheelchair accessible services fee surcharge. The Ordinance requires all for-hire transportation service providers regulated under Chapter 6.64 KCC (taxicabs, for-hire vehicles, and TNC vehicles) to collect and remit to the County, ten cents per trip for all rides that originate within unincorporated King County and municipalities that contract with the County for for-hire transportation regulatory services. The revenue from the fee is intended to be distributed to eligible owners and drivers of wheelchair accessible for-hire vehicles to offset the higher operating costs associated with these vehicles. Collection of the fee began November 12, 2014.

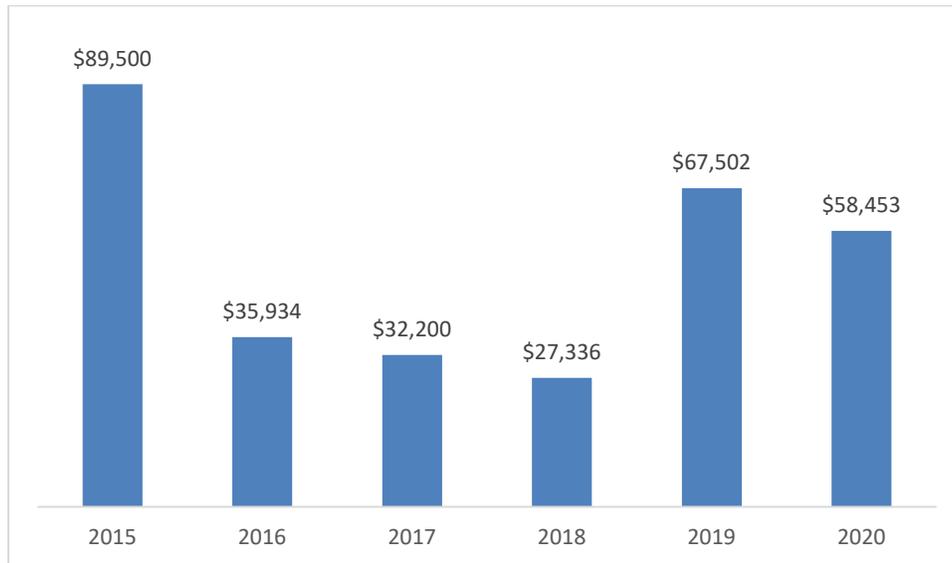
The conditions and procedures for disbursing the wheelchair accessible service (WAS) fee surcharge proceeds to eligible wheelchair accessible taxicab or wheelchair accessible for-hire vehicle owners and drivers are set by public rule FIN-10-3-4-PR.⁹ The rule includes reimbursement rates and categories such as shift-based reimbursements for fuel costs and evening services, WAV-related training, and vehicle acquisition and maintenance expenses.

In response to the significant decline in demand for for-hire transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, King County and Seattle temporarily waived minimum trip requirements for certain reimbursement categories. Minimum wheelchair accessible trip requirements were reinstated for reimbursement eligibility in 2022.

⁹ [Link to FIN-10-3-4-PR](#)

Figures 13 and 14 show WAS fund reimbursement amounts since reimbursements first began in 2014.

Figure 13 – WAT Vehicle Maintenance, Equipment and Acquisition Reimbursement*



*The amounts shown are for the year the expense was incurred, though the reimbursements are generally paid in the following year. However, due to the strains endured by WATs during the COVID-19 pandemic, costs incurred in 2020 and 2021 may be paid quarterly. Thus, the 2019 and 2020 totals include some quarterly reimbursements.

When a for-hire driver operates a vehicle equipped to transport passengers while the passenger is seated in a wheelchair, the driver is eligible for reimbursement from the WAS Fund to help offset the added cost of providing accessible service. The reimbursement rate in 2020 started at \$20.00 per “trip with a passenger in a wheelchair” (TPW). The following table (Figure 13) shows the total amount paid for TPW reimbursements, by year, and the number of drivers participating in the reimbursement program.

Figure 14 – Trip with a Passenger in a Wheelchair Reimbursements*

Year	Trips with a Passenger in a Wheelchair (TPW) Reimbursement	Count of WAT Certified Drivers Reimbursed
2014	\$880	27
2015	\$12,240	69
2016	\$47,020	91
2017	\$69,480	58
2018	\$127,500	67
2019	\$213,420	76
2020	\$124,520	62
2021	\$287,790	54

*In 2018, trip allocation between Seattle and King County was updated to better reflect the responsible jurisdiction when the trip originated with a reported zip code shared by both jurisdictions, resulting in an increase in trips being attributed to the County WAS fund.

IV. Statement of Sufficiency

Pursuant to King County Code 64.740.B.5, this report finds that there are a sufficient number of taxicab and for-hire vehicle medallions in the areas served by King County licensed vehicles. At the same time, trend data outlined in the report shows a decline in active medallions. Updating the regulatory requirements, which is expected to occur later this year, may help encourage owners with inactive medallions to return to operation.

Appendix A – King County Taxicab History 1976 to 2020

1976: The County, Seattle, and the Port of Seattle embarked on a program to regionalize taxicab regulations and licensing by developing consistent regulations and services across jurisdictions. The intent was to promote public safety and customer service by standardizing fees, regulations, enforcement, and rate review procedures throughout the County (King County Motion 2362).

The County regulated entry into the taxicab market and rates charged to passengers. Entry was restricted by a population ratio formula and the King County Council set rates after reviewing prescribed criteria. This “need and necessity” provision required new applicants to show that there was a bona fide need for taxicab service in that zone.

1976 to 1979: The “need and necessity” provision of the King County Motion limiting entry was deleted, resulting in an increased number of licensed taxicabs. The Port of Seattle terminated its exclusive contract for taxicab services at SeaTac International Airport, and a growing number of independent taxicab operators obtained permits to service SeaTac International Airport.

1979 to 1984: The County and Seattle passed ordinances deregulating entry standards and rates (King County Ordinance 4232). With no restrictions on the numbers of licenses issued, taxi owners set their own rates. The deregulation of taxicab licensing resulted in many problems in each jurisdiction. As deregulation continued, consumer views of taxicabs continued to decline; conditions were viewed as deteriorated and rate differences created the perception of price gouging.

1984: Regulation returned, and a conscious effort was made to address the rate variation problem and to increase safety and improve cab conditions. A moratorium was placed on the issuance of new taxicab licenses and rates were set by ordinance.

1985: The County's entry moratorium on licenses expired in 1985, returning the County to open entry; however, rates continued to be set by County ordinance. Also in 1985, the Port of Seattle placed a moratorium on permits to operate at SeaTac International Airport.

1986: The Ad Hoc Taxi Committee was created to study and recommend a method for determining the optimum number of taxis to operate in the County, the criteria and method for setting and/or changing taxicab rates, and to develop a plan for ensuring reciprocity in enforcement and licensing of taxicab businesses. The work of the committee resulted in Ordinance 7964, which created a process to establish rate and entry recommendations based on objective data rather than industry requests, while also placing a moratorium on the issuance of new taxicab licenses.

Since 1986, open entry existed for three brief periods, once during the verification process of a referendum in 1987, in early 1988, and for approximately one month in 1989.

1988: The County, Seattle, and the Port of Seattle formed the Regional Taxicab Commission to recommend rates, entry restrictions, and other related revisions to King County Code Ordinance 8450.

1990-91: In the fall of 1990, County and Seattle staff drafted an ordinance incorporating many of the 1988 Regional Taxicab Commission entry model recommendations. Recommendations included increased standards for licensing and operations of taxicab vehicles and for-hire drivers, proposed closed entry, and maintained a single ordained rate at an increase of approximately eight percent from

\$1.20 drop/\$1.40 mile, to \$1.30 drop/\$1.50 mile. The fixed rate proposed was the same as the highest rate Seattle allowed (ceiling rate). County Proposed Ordinance 90-948 and Seattle Ordinance 108357 were submitted to the County and Seattle councils in November 1990. A joint hearing was held on January 14, 1991, and Seattle adopted the proposed ordinance. Seattle, however, maintained its ceiling rate approach. The King County Council passed Ordinance 9986, permanently closing the issuance of new taxicab licensing.

1992: The County Executive's original rate submission in 1990 of \$1.30 drop/\$1.50 mile was increased in July 1992 to \$1.60 drop/\$1.60 mile. The industry lobbied for a higher rate, and the King County Council adopted its request of \$1.80 drop/\$1.80 mile/\$.50 per minute waiting time.

King County Council passed Ordinance 10498 which significantly changed the for-hire vehicle or taxicab, and for-hire driver standards and regulations. Ordinance 10498 implemented many changes, including:

- Continuing the closed entry system
- Increasing taxicab rate fee from 1.60 drop/\$1.60 mile to \$1.80 drop/\$1.80 mile
- Changing the quarterly data collection process to an annual filing
- Eliminating the required use of net profit ratio formula in rate and entry recommendations
- Enhancing the mechanical certification process for vehicles
- Enhancing the safety and cleanliness requirements for vehicles
- Increasing the number of mandatory safety inspections
- Increasing the for-hire driver standards for entry and denial of licenses
- Establishing several provisions to address consumer protection issues

1995: The County and Seattle entered into a Cooperative Agreement. The agreement grants authority for the County to issue Seattle for-hire driver licenses as an agent for Seattle and for Seattle to issue county taxicab vehicle licenses as an agent for the County. This agreement also grants authority for Seattle and County license inspectors to enforce both Seattle and County taxi codes, and both licenses can be obtained at one convenient location.

1996: In late 1996, Seattle proposed changes to its taxicab ordinance to streamline its laws with County regulations. However, Seattle went further in several areas. Most significant was the requirement that taxicabs belong to associations. Associations are separately licensed entities that maintain a level of oversight liability for operations by vehicle owners and drivers, thereby placing some of the burden of cost to improve service standards on the industry itself. A monetary penalty schedule was established that set fines for violations by drivers, owners, and taxicab associations. Vehicle age restrictions were also implemented. In 1997, all Seattle drivers were required to retake the written examination. All Seattle drivers (new and renewals alike) were required to take an oral test to demonstrate English language proficiency. These changes affected approximately 80 percent of county licensees since drivers were required to have both Seattle and County licenses.

2000: King County Council passed Ordinance 13984 amending standards for the denial of a for-hire driver license. The ordinance added mandatory denial language for applicants with bail forfeitures or convictions within five years of the date of application for vehicle assault, vehicular homicide, or reckless driving. In addition, the ordinance itemized a number of criminal offenses as set out in state law (RCW Title 9) as discretionary grounds for the denial of a license.

2001-04: Beginning in the spring of 2001, the County, the Port of Seattle, and Seattle formed a “Regionalization Workgroup” to study the feasibility of opening access at SeaTac International Airport to all licensed taxicabs. The desire was to create efficiencies by further regionalizing County, Seattle, and Port ordinances and reducing “dead-heading” (taxicabs unable to pick-up passengers must travel back empty), reduce excess pollutants, and expand the number of taxicabs operating across the entire region. Port Commissioners declined to open entry to all taxicabs operating within the County at SeaTac International Airport and re-signed an exclusive operating agreement with one taxicab company, STITA.

The County, led by Metro’s Accessible Services, joined a task force with representatives from Seattle, the Port of Seattle, and other stakeholders to address the issue of taxicab accessibility for citizens with wheelchairs and other mobility devices. In late 2003, Metro Accessible Services secured grant money from the state and began meeting with King County RALS and Seattle representatives to develop implementation plans for licensing and placing into service wheelchair-accessible taxicabs. Ordinances were passed by both the County and Seattle to initiate a demonstration project to study wheelchair accessible taxicab service issues.

In 2004, Ordinance 15059 increased taxicab vehicle and driver fees to help recover licensing and enforcement costs and reflect inflation. Vehicle fees increased from \$240 to \$300 per year and for-hire driver application fees increased from \$60 to \$75 per year (plus a \$5 photo fee).

A taximeter rate increase was proposed (Proposed Ordinance 2004-0466) to increase rates from \$1.80 drop/\$1.80 per mile to \$2.50 drop/\$2.00 per mile. Rates had not been increased in nearly twelve years (since 1992) and the cost of living had increased 36 percent. In addition, operating costs such as fuel had soared by more than 78 percent since 1992. Based on a 15-mile trip, the proposed rate represented only a 13 percent increase. The increase was proposed by Seattle’s Taxicab Advisory Group, which included taxicab drivers, owners, and associations; senior and disabled citizens from the community; and Department of Social and Health Services providers.

2005: County Ordinance 15132 increased taximeter rates to \$2.50 drop/\$2.00 per mile. The rates went into effect on April 1, 2005, for both the County and Seattle. The County and Seattle inspectors worked together to ensure all 842 taxicabs had their meters tested and sealed by early afternoon that day. As an added convenience to the taxicab owners and drivers, the County and Seattle staff arranged the special meter inspections to occur at the taxi company lots.

County Ordinance 15263 established the Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab (WAT) Demonstration project, and included minor changes which affected taxicab insurance, added an additional driver safety training requirement, added a mandatory oral English test, and changed the taxicab licensee year. The ordinance became effective September 18, 2005, and the pilot project was implemented in October 2006.

County Ordinance 15309 approved a methodology for issuing additional taxicab licenses and made taxicab licenses issued after January 1, 2006, nontransferable (effective November 13, 2005). Taxicab licenses issued before January 1, 2006, are transferable meaning that they can be bought and sold on the open market. The non-transferability issue arose from complaints and comments received from taxicab drivers during public hearings on the WAT Demonstration project.

County Ordinance 15282 established the Accessible Taxi Advisory Committee to be selected in the spring of 2006. The committee consists of nine members recruited by the County Executive in consultation with the King County Council. Membership of the committee reflects the diversity and

geographic distribution of County residents. Seven of the members were appointed before start-up of the WAT Demonstration project and the remaining two positions were filled later by WAT users having experience with the service. This committee helped ensure that the pilot project was implemented in a way that accurately gauged the demand for and viability of accessible taxi service in the Seattle and County markets. The committee monitored the preparation for and implementation of the pilot project and advised the King County Licensing and Metro Accessible Service sections.

2007: Public Rule LIC 8-3 was adopted, as allowed under the 2005 Ordinance 15309, to test alternative ways of structuring taxi associations and the terms of taxicab license leases, while improving taxi driver/lessee economic viability and achieving environmental benefits by requiring hybrid vehicles.

2008: Ordinance 15951 increased and changed meter rates as follows: fee per mile changed to \$0.25 per 1/10 mile from \$0.20 per 1/10 mile; and fee per wait minute changed to \$0.50 per minute (charged at \$0.25 per 30 seconds) when the vehicle slows below 12 miles per hour from \$0.20 per minute when the vehicle slows below 17 miles per hour. There was no change in the drop rate.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) process established five new County-only Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Licenses in 2008 as an outcome of a Request for Proposal related to the 2005 “Alternative Ways to Structure a Taxicab Association Project.”

2009: Ordinance 16695 increased fees for the for-hire driver licenses, added a new fee for rescheduling, and corrected change of owner dates, which took effect January 1, 2010. The Seattle/King County Taxicab Advisory Commission was established to study regulations, rules, policies, and issues relevant to the provision of high-quality taxicab service in Seattle (SMC 3.73.030) and the County (KCC 2.200.010) while ensuring the economic viability of owning and driving taxicabs, and to make recommendations to Seattle and the County on these matters.

2010: Ordinance 16824 established forty-five permanent Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab licenses to be issued as Dual Seattle-County licenses and regulating wheelchair accessible taxicab licenses; making technical corrections; and amending Ordinance 10498.

2011: King County Council and the Seattle City Council appointed 10 members to the joint Seattle/County Taxicab Advisory Commission, which was established by Ordinance in 2009. The commission had its first meeting in July. The purpose of the Taxicab Advisory Commission was to study regulations, rules, policies, and issues relevant to the provision of high-quality taxicab service in Seattle and the County while ensuring the economic viability owning and driving taxicabs, and to make recommendations to Seattle and the County on these matters.

2012: Ordinance 17404 increased and changed taxicab meter rates in September as follows: increasing the fee per mile changed to \$0.30 per 1/9 mile from \$0.25 per 1/10 mile, and the fee per wait time of \$0.50 per minute changed to charge at \$.30 per 36 seconds from \$0.25 per 30 seconds. There was no change in the drop rate.

2013: Ordinance 17665 modifications addressed industry concerns for public safety and taxicab standards, along with changes identified in the Lean value stream mapping event conducted by Records and Licensing Services (RALS). The Lean effort in RALS identified process improvements to the for-hire driver application process that are incorporated in the code revisions.

2014: On September 15, 2014, Ordinance 17892 was passed and brought numerous changes to the for-hire industry regulations including those related to taxicabs. Consistent with new legislation passed by Seattle, the County ordinance brought new regulations for a new business model operating as Transportation Network Companies (TNC). Ordinance 17892 also streamlined regulatory requirements across the for-hire industry and new per-trip fees were implemented, including the Wheelchair Accessibility Surcharge (WAS) of \$0.10 per trip and the TNC Licensing fee of \$0.35 per trip. A new cap was established on for-hire vehicles.

2015: King County Licensing began issuing for-hire driver permits and vehicle endorsements to TNC drivers and partnered with Seattle to convert existing taxi and for-hire vehicle licenses into medallions. Seattle provides the authority for for-hire transportation drivers to organize (Ord. 124968 – adopted December 14, 2015).

The Seattle/King County Taxicab Advisory Commission was placed on inactive status in November of 2015 based on the request of Commission members and has remained inactive every year since.

2016: Public Rule FIN-10-3-PR, Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund - Disbursement was implemented effective August 1, 2016. The rule outlines the methodology for distributing the collected surcharge.

Additional 2016 highlights include:

- The Port of Seattle awarded Eastside For-Hire Inc. the airport service contract.
- Passage of King County Ordinance 18338 updated insurance requirements for taxicabs, for-hire vehicles, and TNC-endorsed vehicles.
- Passage of King County Ordinance 18230 amended the appeal process for license denials, suspensions, revocations, and civil penalties from the Board of Appeals to the Hearing Examiner's Office.
- Seattle began implementing Ordinance 124968, regarding collective bargaining rights for for-hire drivers, by establishing Director's Rules to guide the process.
- The Port of Seattle established a one-year pilot contract with three TNC's, adding designated waiting areas, and customer pick up areas at SeaTac International Airport.
- KC Licensing office implemented customer service enhancements, including accepting credit cards and website revisions.
- Seattle increased the TNC per ride fee from \$0.10 to \$0.14.
- Seattle awarded city medallions to the five County-Only WAT owners, resulting in a total of 50 Dual WAT medallions.

2017: Seattle and the County launched the Transportation Regulation Improvement Project (TRIP) to develop a single Seattle/County, consolidated system for handling for-hire licensing and regulations using an electronic, online system.

55 new Seattle-only taxicab medallions were awarded by lottery to existing/qualified drivers and 13 voluntary conversions of regular for-hire vehicles to wheelchair accessible vehicles were approved. Significant work went into reducing the TNC application permit processing backlog from more than 90 days to within seven days.

King County Council proposed a motion (No. 2017-0302.1) requesting the King County Executive to enter into negotiations with Seattle to allow taxi license holders reciprocal operating rights between Seattle

and the County, requiring County Executive to develop an ordinance to conform to adopted Seattle legislation, and later the motion was amended to include consolidating the appeal process for appellants who appeal RALS license actions.

Launched a “Listening and Engagement Tour,” reaching out to and meeting with local dispatch companies, medallion owners, drivers, special interest groups and other industry stakeholders, to better understand the state of the for-hire industry, discuss desired changes from the stakeholder/customer perspective, and share ideas and concepts from the regulatory perspective, and to increase direct communication and accessibility between the industry and County/Seattle regulators. As well as discussions focused on opportunities to further leverage the wheelchair accessible surcharge funds.

2018: For-hire driver permit processing maintained a seven-day processing time after reaching historic peaks more than 90 days. Coupled with this improvement to processing time, Port of Seattle-SeaTac International Airport Ground Transportation management announced a requirement for TNC for-hire driver permits and TNC vehicle endorsement decals on all vehicles operating at the airport. King County Inspectors partnered with SeaTac Ground Transportation enforcement staff to provide notice of the transition and instructions for how to be compliant with the requirements by March 1, 2018.

King County Ordinance (18665) was adopted, leading to the removal of citizenship status, immigration status and place of birth from for-hire licensing applications.

The 2018 Washington State Legislature appropriated funding and directed the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to conduct two studies, one focused on taxi and for-hire vehicle regulations and the other focused on transportation network company regulations. The studies were transmitted to the JTC in January 2019 and can be found here: <http://leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/CurrentStudies.aspx>.

For-hire code revisions to chapter 6.64 were discussed with industry stakeholders (associations and for-hire companies, Port of Seattle) to identify changes and improvements of existing language. Specifically, identifying barriers to competition that may exist in County regulations preventing the taxicab and for-hire segment of the for-hire industry from the ability to compete and innovate.

A request for proposal (RFP) was advertised to award 25 new wheelchair accessible taxicab medallions in response to requests from consumers and industry to better meet demand for accessible services. The process was planned to award medallions in the first half of the year 2019, though it later closed without award.

King County reduced fees for taxicab and for-hire vehicle licenses, for-hire driver licenses, taxicab association licenses and for-hire company registrations, and transportation network company per-ride fees under the required considerations set forth in King County Code 4A.750.100 (B).

2019: The request for proposals, announced in December 2018, to award 25 new Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Medallions closed in February of 2019. The selection process was met with several broad requests for public information and protests that delayed awarding the medallions. As of the end of 2019, the 25 new medallions had not yet been awarded.

The County Council adopted Ordinance 18874, removing the requirement for TNC drivers to be the registered owner of the endorsed vehicle they drive and added a 10-year age limit for TNC vehicles.

Taxicab Association Yellow Cab, in cooperation with Records and Licensing Services (RALS) and City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), deployed a new type of taximeter called a 'smart meter'. The two most notable differences include the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to measure distance and time and the use of real time traffic data that, if authorized by regulation, supports dynamic pricing and other fare pricing strategies that modernize taxi related service. The Yellow Cab smart meter replaced the traditional taximeters that measure time and distance through a mechanical connection to the vehicle.

King County Council passed motion 15512 requesting the Executive to develop a recommendation report for adding requirements related to human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation awareness training and testing for for-hire drivers.

The Port of Seattle's contract with a single vendor affiliated with a fleet of taxicab and for-hire vehicles for for-hire ground transportation at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport expired in October 2019. The expired contract was replaced by contracts with over 400 individual medallion owners, all of whom operated their vehicles under the previous vendor contract.

King County Council passed ordinance 18989 relating to establishment of an electric scooter share pilot. The ordinance directs the executive to establish a scooter share pilot for up to one year in the North Highline urban unincorporated area of King County.

Seattle adopted ordinances related to TNC drivers: A Minimum Compensation Study ordinance, a Deactivation Rights ordinance and an ordinance imposing a \$0.57 tax on TNC rides to take effect July 1, 2020. The Minimum Compensation ordinance authorizes a study to set a minimum compensation rate of at least the independent contractor equivalent of Seattle's large employer minimum wage (\$16.39 in 2020) plus reasonable expenses. The deactivation rights ordinance establishes a right to be free from unwarranted deactivation, creates an arbitration process for drivers to challenge such deactivations, and funds a Driver Resolution Center to represent drivers at arbitration hearings.

2020: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RALS closed offices to customer-facing services. RALS adjusted TNC work to authorize and enable employees to process application materials remotely, including emailing images of the TNC Driver permits directly to the drivers to eliminate the need for in-person contact. RALS issued license extensions to all for-hire driver licensees with a valid driver license to avoid disruption to their business.

RALS worked with the City of Seattle to draft proposed revisions to County and Seattle for-hire regulations. The project goals are to simplify and align licensing models, remove barriers that limit competition, transition to technology that enables dynamic fares and alternative pricing strategies, and improve customer service.

Seattle imposed additional operating requirements for certain qualifying TNCs, including a \$0.57 tax on TNC trips that originate inside the Seattle city limits beginning July 1, 2020. In October, Seattle approved a new law that establishes minimum driver compensation standards for TNCs that perform 200K trips or more per quarter. The minimum compensation requirement is set to take effect January 1, 2021.

King County Public Rule FIN-10-3-1 went into effect in January 2020 increasing reimbursement rates and establishing new reimbursement categories paid from the Wheelchair Accessible Services fund. An emergency rule was implemented in March 2020, amending FIN-10-3-1, to help preserve continuity of

wheelchair services during the COVID-19 pandemic by suspending the minimum trip requirements through the end of 2020 and providing for quarterly reimbursements for vehicle maintenance and equipment expenses, which are typically paid annually after the end of the year. In June 2020 the emergency rules were finalized into a formal rule (FIN-10-3-2) authorizing the emergency allowances through the end of 2020.

The December 2018 request for proposals to award 25 new Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Medallions closed in February of 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic struck while the RFP process was ongoing and significantly reduced the demand for for-hire transportation leading to a decision to cancel the RFP.

RALS submitted a report in June 2020 in response to King County Council Motion 15512 recommending the County develop an anti-human trafficking awareness training video customized to the for-hire transportation industry.

King County Council Ordinance 18989 required RALS to establish and manage an electric scooter share pilot program in the North Highline Urban Unincorporated Area. The pilot period began when shared scooters first became available to the public for use, August 17, 2020.

Work continued on the Transportation Regulation Improvement Project (TRIP), a project to implement a new for-hire licensing platform as a shared system between the Seattle and King County. Implementation of the system has occurred in stages with much of the 2020 work focused on online medallion renewal processing and configuration of the for-hire driver licensing module.